

FACT SHEET

FINAL RULE TO REMOVE ETHYLENE GLYCOL MONOBUTYL ETHER FROM THE CLEAN AIR ACT LIST OF HAZARDOUS AIR POLLUTANTS

ACTION

- On November 18, 2004 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed ethylene glycol monobutyl ether (EGBE) from the list of toxic air pollutants the Agency is required to regulate under the Clean Air Act.
- After extensively reviewing the levels of EGBE in the air Americans breathe and the health and environmental impacts associated with those levels, EPA has concluded that potential outdoor exposures to EGBE may not reasonably be anticipated to cause human health or environmental problems.
- The Clean Air Act allows EPA to consider petitions to modify the air toxics list, by adding or removing substances. Today's final rule removes EGBE from a list of 188 chemicals or groups of chemicals for which EPA is required to develop national, technology-based emissions control standards. This action follows two detailed reviews on the sufficiency and technical merit of a 1997 petition to remove EGBE from the list.
- Like other members of the group of chemicals referred to as "glycol ethers," EGBE is used as a solvent in the surface coatings industry. In 2000, EGBE made up an estimated 45 percent of the U.S. production of glycol ether (total production 325,000 - 350,000 tons). EGBE is used in hydraulic fluids and in water-based coatings. It is used in vinyl and acrylic paints and varnishes, and as a solvent for varnishes, enamels, spray lacquers, dry cleaning compounds, textiles and cosmetics. It is also used as a solvent for grease and grime in industrial cleaning.
- EPA reviewed EGBE exposure and health effects in response to a petition from the American Chemistry Council (formerly the Chemical Manufacturer's Association).
- A new study about the potential for EGBE to cause cancer in humans was released by industry scientists several months after EPA proposed in November 2003 to remove EGBE from the list of air toxics.
- EPA had the new study peer reviewed in May 2004. The peer reviewers concluded that while mice exhibited liver tumors after exposure to EGBE, they would not expect to find liver tumors in humans. This is because humans do not exhibit the cell changes that lead to the EGBE-related types of tumors seen in mice. Without these cell changes, tumors do not occur.

- Based on the results of the peer review, and on the body of scientific information about EGBE, EPA concluded that humans cannot reasonably be anticipated to develop tumors from environmental concentrations of EGBE.

BACKGROUND

- The Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate 188 chemical compounds that are listed as toxic air pollutants.
- The law allows EPA to consider petitions to modify the list, by adding or removing substances. To date, EPA has removed one pollutant, caprolactam, from the original list of 189 pollutants. The Agency denied a petition to remove methanol from the air toxics list in 2001.
- EPA also can remove a single chemical from a chemical group. In 2000, we removed long chain glycol ethers from a group of glycol ethers listed. Today's delisting removes EGBE from that same group.
- Any person may petition EPA to modify the air toxics list by adding or removing one or more substances. Petitioners seeking to remove a substance must demonstrate that there are adequate data to determine that emissions, outdoor concentrations, bioaccumulation, or atmospheric deposition of the substance may not reasonably be anticipated to damage human health or the environment.
- Once EPA receives a petition, it conducts two reviews: a completeness review, to determine whether there is sufficient information on which to base a decision; and a technical review, to evaluate the merits of the petition.
- During the technical review, EPA considers both information contained in the petition and information received from the public to determine whether the petition satisfies the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Once that comprehensive review is complete, EPA decides whether to propose removing the substance from the air toxics list.
- The American Chemistry Council submitted its original petition in August, 1997 and provided additional materials in December, 1998. In August 1999, EPA published a Federal Register notice announcing that the petition was complete and requesting technical information on the toxicity and health effects of EGBE. The Agency carefully considered the body of scientific information about EGBE and proposed to delist the chemical on Nov. 21, 2003. The Agency has determined that the petition met the legal requirements set out in the Clean Air Act.
- EPA based its final decision on whether to delist EGBE in part on the public comments received the November proposal. We received a total of 18 comments on the proposed rule. Three commenters opposed deleting EGBE from the air toxics list; however, they provided no data to support their positions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Copies of the original petition and its supporting information are available for public inspection and copying at the following address: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (6102), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20460.
- For further information including the final rule and the Federal Register notice once published, go to EPA's web site at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>.